

Whither Dentistry ?



QUO VADIS

George Paul

What is Quo Vadis?

Several people have asked me the meaning of Quo Vadis(1). Many in the older generation may remember a Bata footwear by the same name. For many people of my generation it was a popular footwear from the famous house of Bata. Quo Vadis simply means “Where are you going?”- in Latin. Simple as it may sound, it has a profound provenance. It has been used by hundreds of writers and speakers to ask a question that is both meaningful and rhetorical. There is an apocryphal story that this was a question put to Jesus Christ by St Peter. “To be crucified again” Jesus is supposed to have replied. This seems to be the predicament of dentistry in India.



Dr R Ahmed 1890- 1965

Dr R Ahmed qualified as a Dentist from the University of Iowa in 1910. On returning to India he established the first dental college in the country, calling it the Bengal Dental School. He funded the college himself. Dr Ahmed then donated the Dental College to the Government of India in 1949. He was a minister in the BC Roy Government. He was also the President of the Dental Council and later President of the IDA. He was later inducted into the Pierre Fauchard Hall of Fame. This Oration is dedicated to his memory for the outstanding contribution to Dentistry.



Journey of an young teacher



Let me begin with a small story. In 1952 a young school teacher from a small village in the South of India travelled to several cities across the country in search of an opportunity to do a post graduation in botany.

In 1952

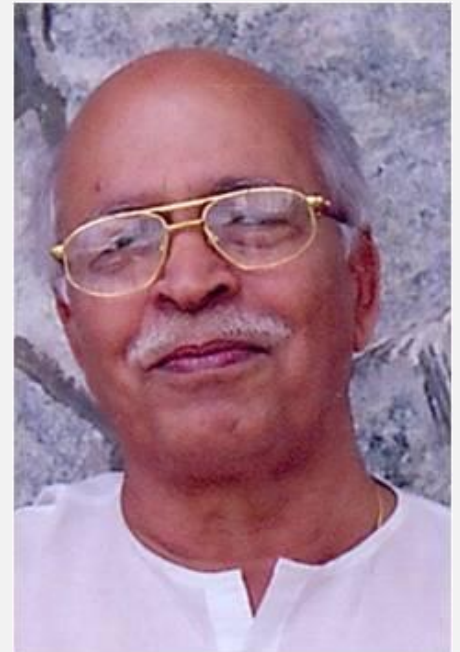
Unsuccessful, he was returning home via Bombay (now Mumbai), when he accidentally bumped into an old classmate from his village in the YMCA. The teacher was amazed to learn that his friend was doing a four year course in 'dentistry' in Bombay. It was at a time when Dentist or Dentistry was unheard of in the small towns and villages of India. The only dentist that the teacher knew of was a dubious gentleman who wore a black robe and pulled teeth at the weekly market. The teacher accompanied his friend on a visit to the Nair Hospital Dental College. After being surprised that dentistry was taught in a college for 4 years, he was further taken aback by the 5 storey buildings and the well dressed people going about in bow ties and white coats. On a whim, he joined the college.



Dr G Paulose 1929-2008

Four years later, the young school teacher became a qualified dentist. The only problem was that back in his village, no decent family would give their daughter in marriage to someone who pulled teeth for a living. Finally he married a shy girl from a nearby village convincing them that he was some kind of doctor. The salvaging fact was that in any case he was also a former school teacher.

This newly minted dentist was my father!



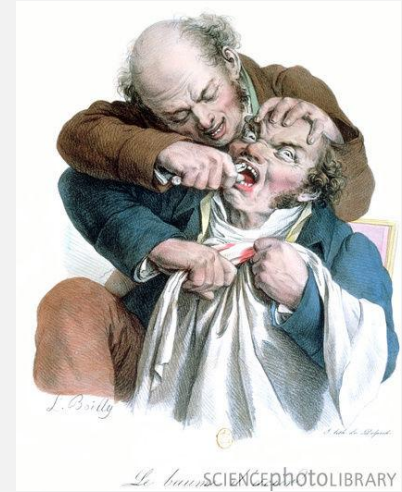
From a foot peddle drill to Laser dentistry- 60 years of progress

The story of my father Dr G Paulose, who passed away in 2008 after practicing dentistry for more than 50 years is more or less the story of dentistry in that period.. In his fifty years of practice he saw the establishment of dentistry as a specialty of medical science from being a mere semi skilled vocation.



From barbaric tooth puller to sophisticated medical specialist

He grew with his profession and saw it flourish. As a Dentist he was recognized in society as an important health professional. He even saw the establishment of a dental college in his small city.



Courtesy Dr Rohera's clinic

The Dark Side of practice

By the time of his death in 2008 he also witnessed the first signs of decadence and the dark side of the profession. Proliferation of colleges, cheap advertisements, unemployment, ethical misconduct and several ills had begun to creep into the once respected profession which he accidentally stepped into 50 years before. Dentistry had come a full circle.



Unethical advertising and marketing – The result of unhealthy competition caused by glut

A TIMES OF INDIA GROUP INITIATIVE

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an the barian(English)
Jason Momoa, el Nichols, Stephen Leo Howard
ector: Marcus Nispel
on/Fantasy: After a of warriors destroys ung Conan's Howard) e, steals a mask and his father, the boy i revenge. Hunting rford for years, (Momoa) discovers e name of the mur- Lucius, also known ar Eym (Lang). And s the fight of good vil. Somewhere on onas meets the Tamara (Nichols) her own following Arnold epper's epic orig- er. Jason Momoa s role of the s the barbar

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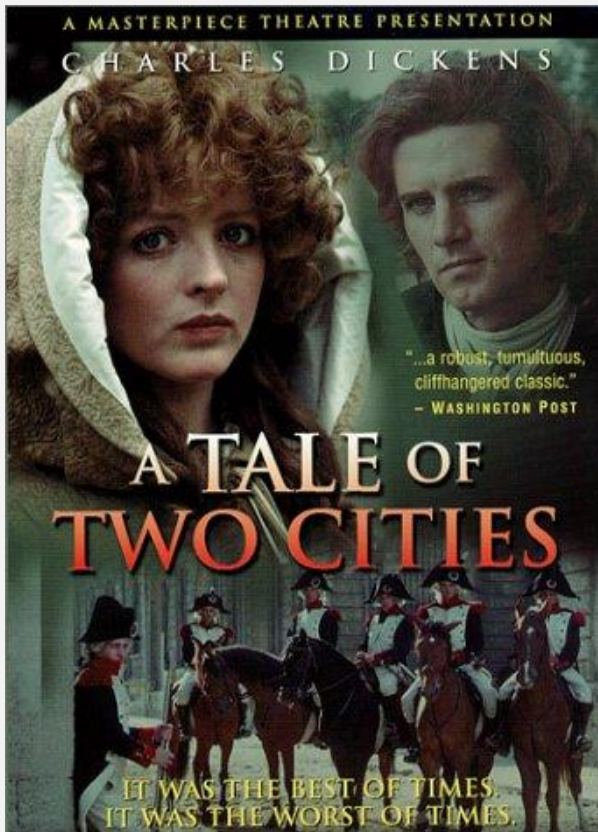
West Sambanda R.S Puram, Cbe.

Fitn

* At select centre

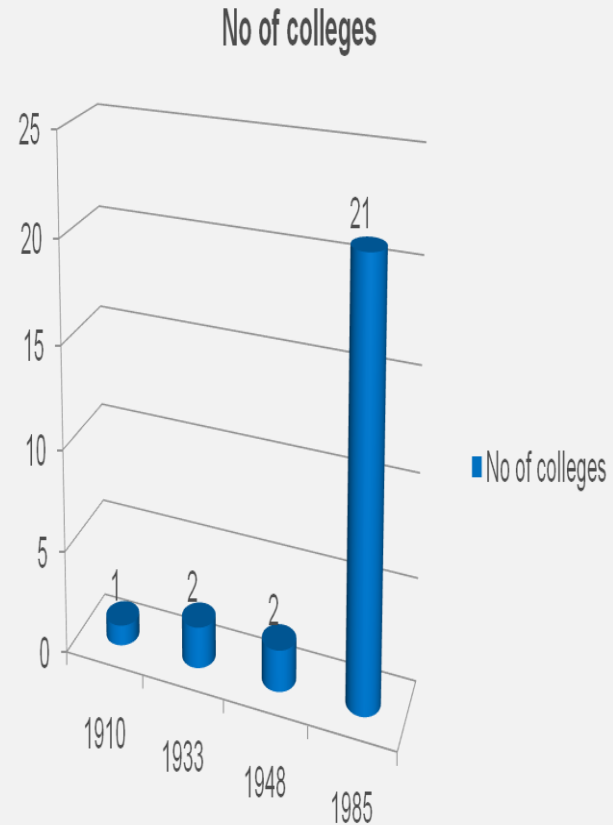
Coimbatore

‘It was the best of Times. It was the worst of times’ Charles Dickens in The Tale of Two Cities



From 1910- 1985

The number of dental colleges stagnated in the first 50 years of the twentieth century. There were just two colleges for a population of 350 million population in 1947 when India became independent. Less than forty years later in 1985 there were 21 dental colleges. This was a 10 fold increase in 40 years.

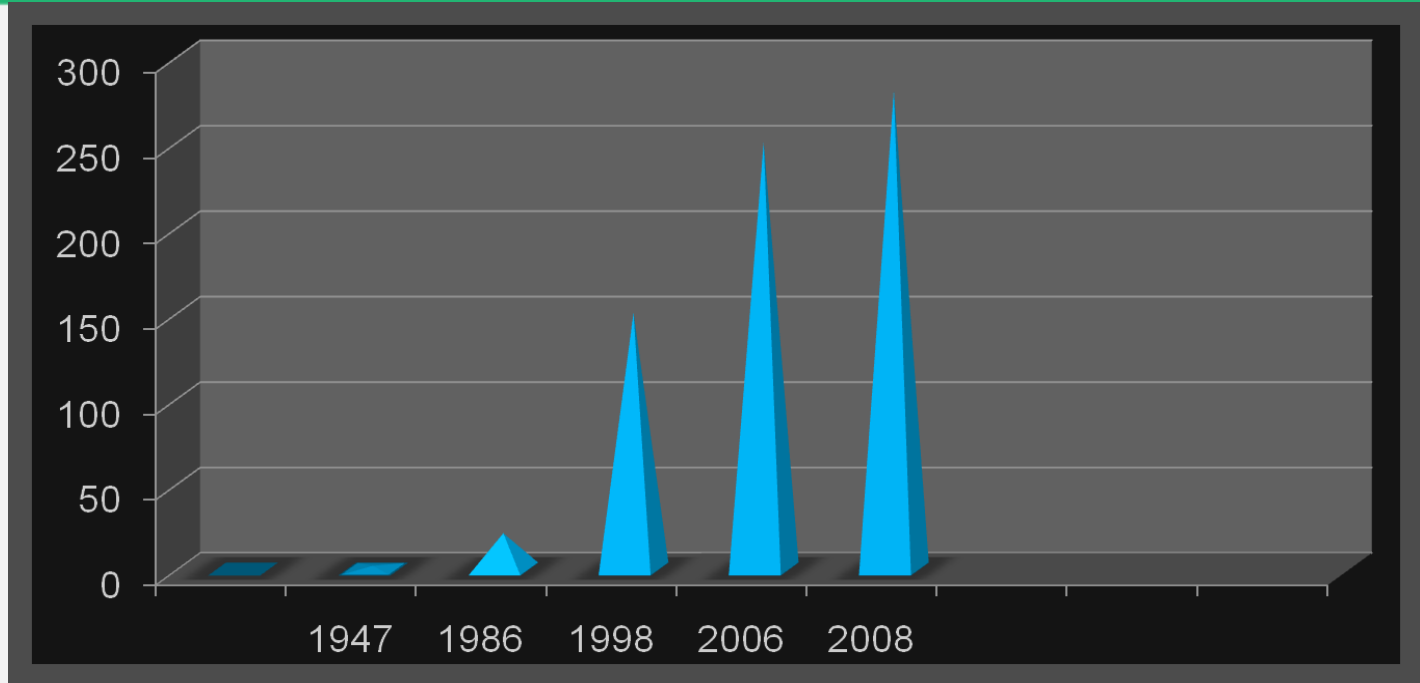


Did this make a significant positive impact on health care?

Perhaps Yes! It was the threshold of the golden period of dentistry.

Dentistry went on to become a much sought after vocation recognized by the medical fraternity and society. It reached its pinnacle about 25 years ago. At the height of its glory Dentistry became a competitive profession with entry only for the brightest

Stats on increase from Independence through 1986 and then to 2008



. Over the next 20 years the increase became more dramatic. The number of college rose sharply to approximately 240 dental colleges. This was an increase by 1200% in 20 years.

Did India's Oral Health Care improve?

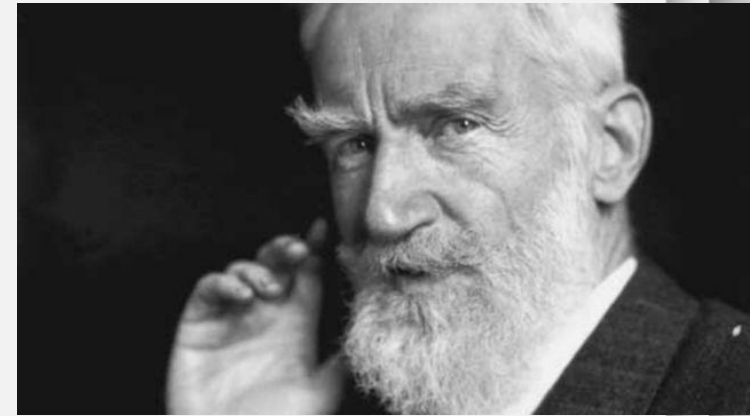
No!*

Today, dentistry is crowded by mediocrity. As a profession it is losing its glamour. Hundreds of seats in Government Universities are going vacant. Dental education has moved back into the hands of the private sector where admissions are open to candidates with moderate scholastic ability. Thousands are jobless.

* GOI and WHO Conference of Manpower resources, New Delhi

“There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics”.

A Government of India and WHO collaborative workshop on manpower resources in Delhi in 2006 concluded that the increase in the number of dentists had no impact on the dental health care in the country



- George Bernard Shaw



- Benjamin Disraeli

How we can sometimes get things wrong! Projections made in 2002 in an Indian Journal Dental Education

The amazing aspect of the increase in dental institutions were based on absolutely faulty data and projections. An article on growth of dentistry actually predicted that there would only be 31,000 dentists in the country by 2010 based on the fact that there were only 20,000 registered dentists in 1990.

Year	Graduates
1960	1,370
1970	8,000
1980	13,930
1990	20,000
2010	30,570

Wrong Expectations !!

“Thus, the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century saw an increase in the number of enrollments. But in the near future there may be a reduced number of people entering these colleges as the rapid growth in the number of dentists might tend to discourage some prospective candidates who may feel that the increased competition would limit their future earnings.”*

*** Challenges to the Oral Health Workforce in India**

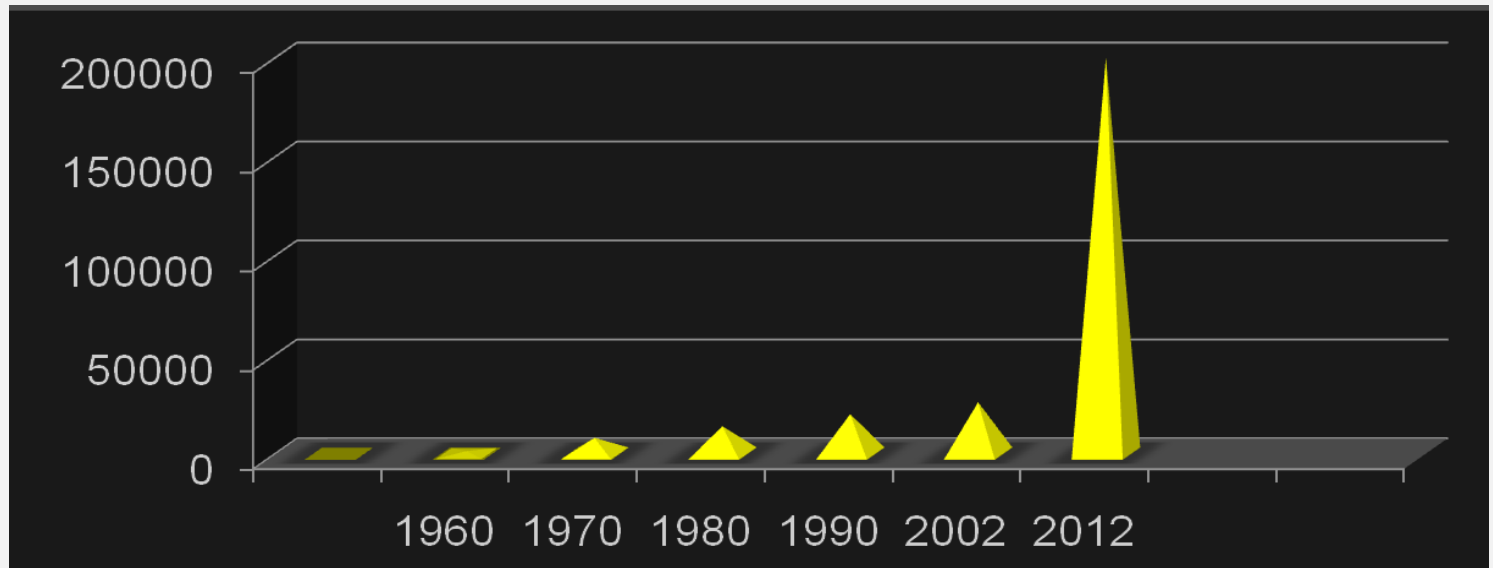
*****, B.D.S., M.D.S.

Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (A Deemed University), Manipal, India

Growth in number of graduates from Indian dental schools*

In reality there were 200,000 dentists in 2012 as against the projected 30,000.

- 1960 1,370
- 1970 8,000
- 1980 13,930
- 1990 20,000
- 2002 26,000
- 2012 200,000



Was the Planning commission relying on false statistics when it said “2 lakh Dentists needed”!?!?



“As per a Planning Commission study, the country is short of six lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses and 2 lakh dental surgeons.....”

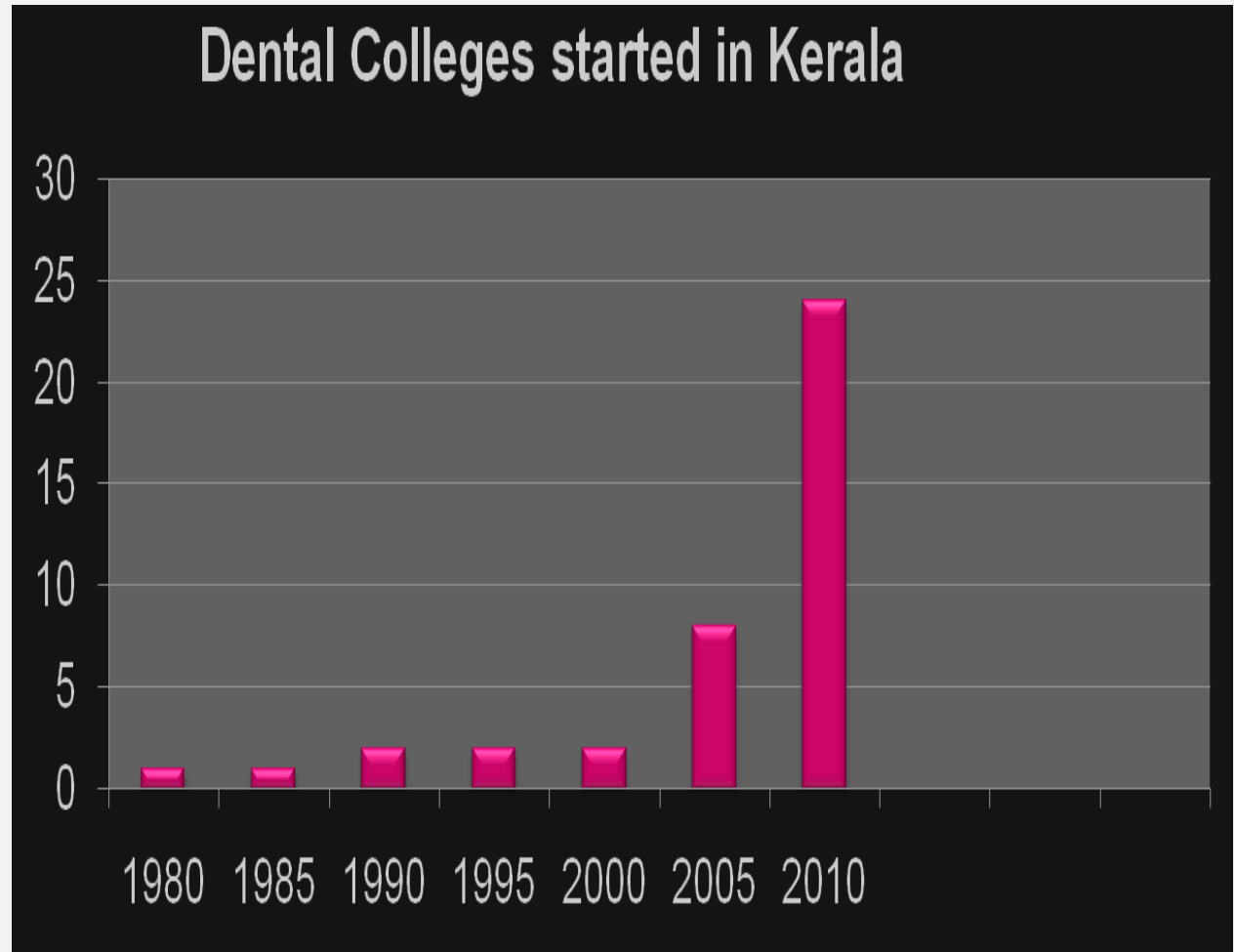
*Kounteya Sinha, TNN Dec 13, 2011, 04.02AM IST

The dangerous course of Dentistry in Kerala

- A Case Study

Dental Colleges in Kerala *

- 1980- 1
- 1985- 1
- 1990-2
- 1995-2
- 2000-2
- 2005-8
- 2010-24



Demographics of Kerala 2011*

Population of Kerala – 33.38 million

Number of Dentists Registered in
Kerala- 10,000 (approx)

* Census figures 2011 and State Dental Council
registrations

Number of admissions

1980-30

1985-60

1990- 100

1995-100

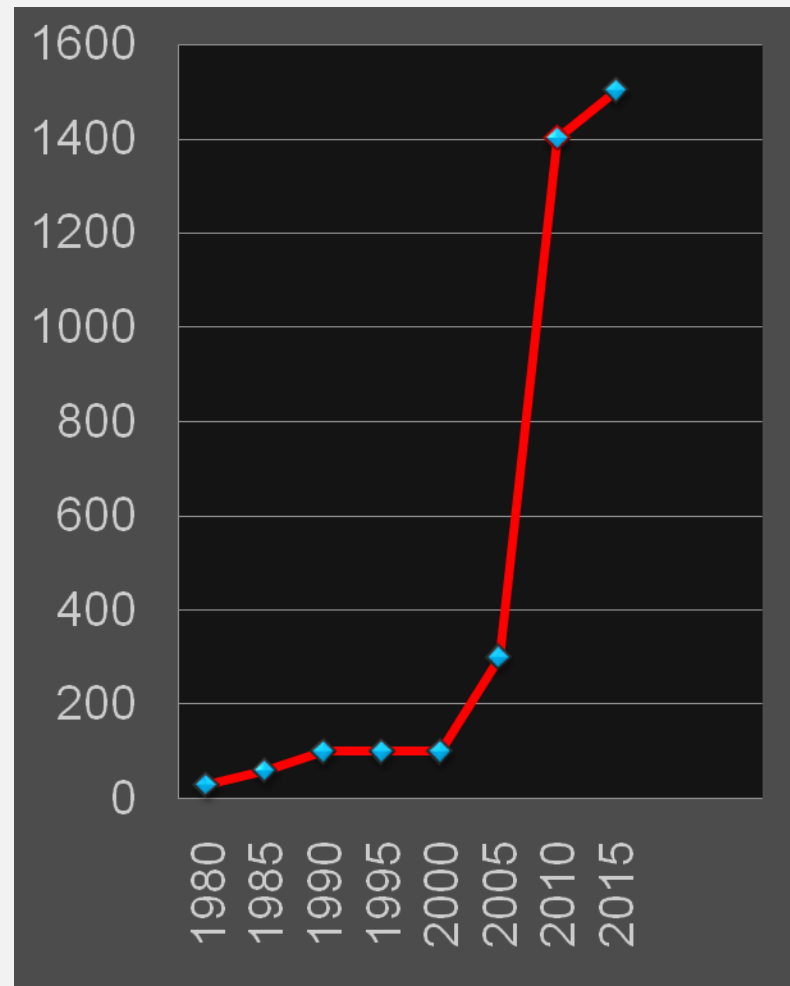
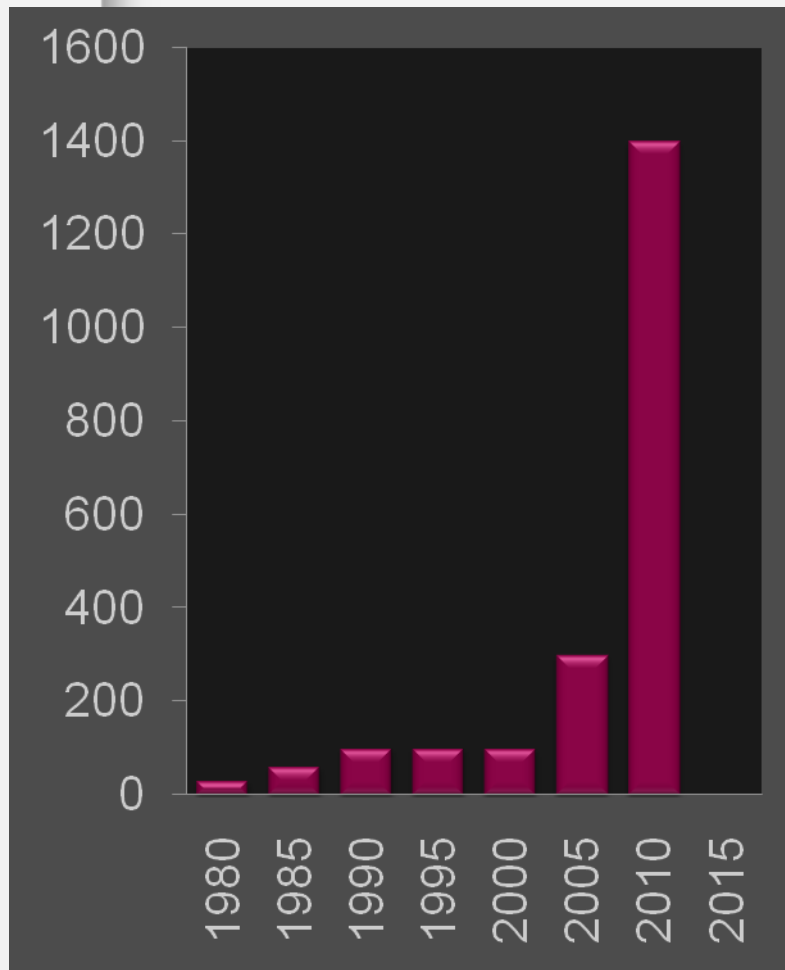
2000-100

2005-300

2010-1400 - Projected

2015- ??? - Projected

Number of admissions per year in Kerala



Recommended Dentist Population Ratio 1:7500

- Karnataka 1:2130
- Kerala 1: 3388 *
- Tamilnadu 1:4500 (approx)

* Most Dentists graduated from out of state. The new colleges had not started graduating students

Source: Manpower resource utilization- GO and WHO 2006

Projected number of Dentists in 2015

16,000 (approx) for a population of 37 million (approx)

- Kerala population is projected to grow at less than 4.8% decadal grow. (population growth from 2001-2011 is from 33.3 million to 36.4 million) **

*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Kerala#CITEREF_GOK2005b

** : Census of India 2011

Points to be taken in projecting population growth in 2015

All 24 Colleges start graduating dentists

Assuming no more colleges are sanctioned
and seats are increased

Assuming same population growth rate
(likely to decrease)

	2011	2021	2031	
Dentist	1	1	1	
Population	3339	1521	1019	1300 dentist/Year with 4.8% growth
Population	3339	1166	733	2000 dentist/Year with 4.8% growth
Population	3339	2916	2619	200 dentist/Year with 4.8% growth

Today several of these colleges have applied for increase in seats. Even if we did not count these increased seats, by 2020 the dentist population ratio will be 1:1500 (approx). By 2030 the ratio will become 1:733. With increase in seats or increase in colleges it may end up as one dentist for every street or even worse. Can a Dentist actually survive as a professional???

Projection for Kerala in 2030

- Conservative estimate 1 dentist for 1500 population if there are no more colleges and no more increase in seats
- Possible ratio if seats are increased . 1 dentist for 733 population
- Dentist Population Ratio in the USA 1:1700 (approx)
- Significant number of dentists even if the colleges are shut down to produce only 200 per year.

The result of population glut

Thousands of dentists work for Accenture and other multinationals around the country.

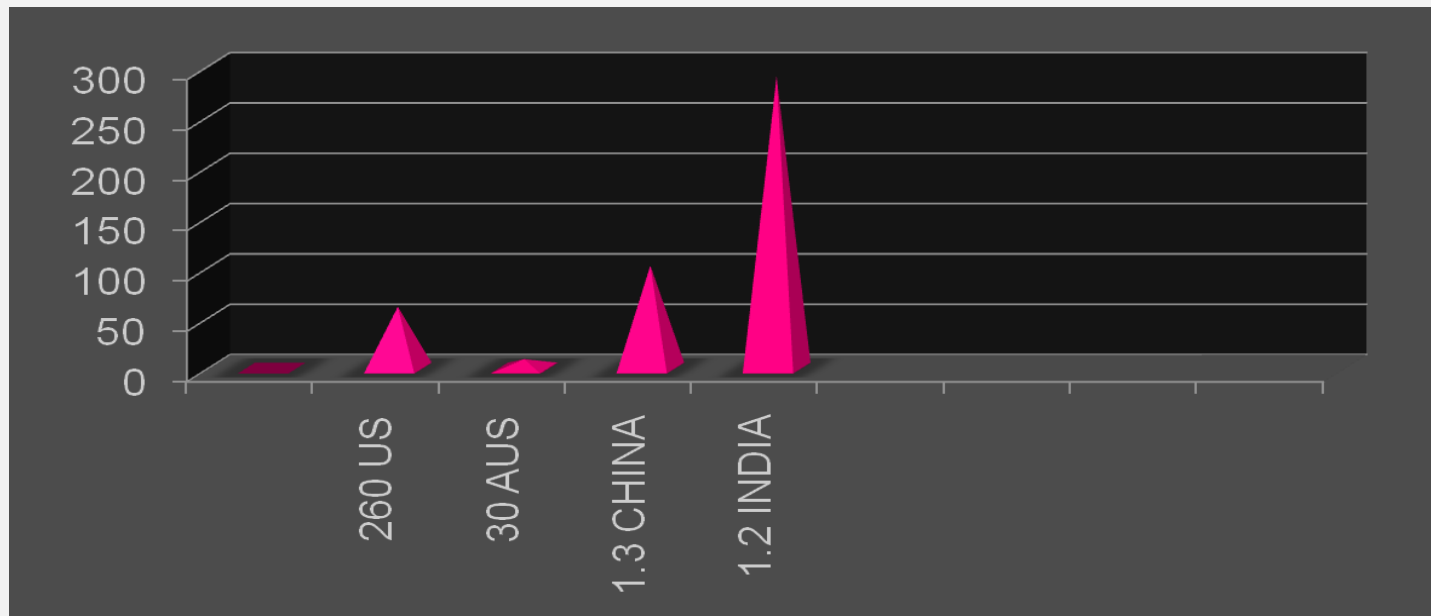
1000s of others work in pharmacovigilance, BPO and other allied fields

Average salaries of fresh graduates seeking employment in Private clinics (Rs 5000).

Average salaries of drivers with school education (Rs4000-5000)

Dental Schools and Population globally

- USA 260 million- 61 dental schools
- Australia 30 million 9 dental schools
- China 1.3 billion- 102 dental schools
- India 1.21 billion - 291 dental schools

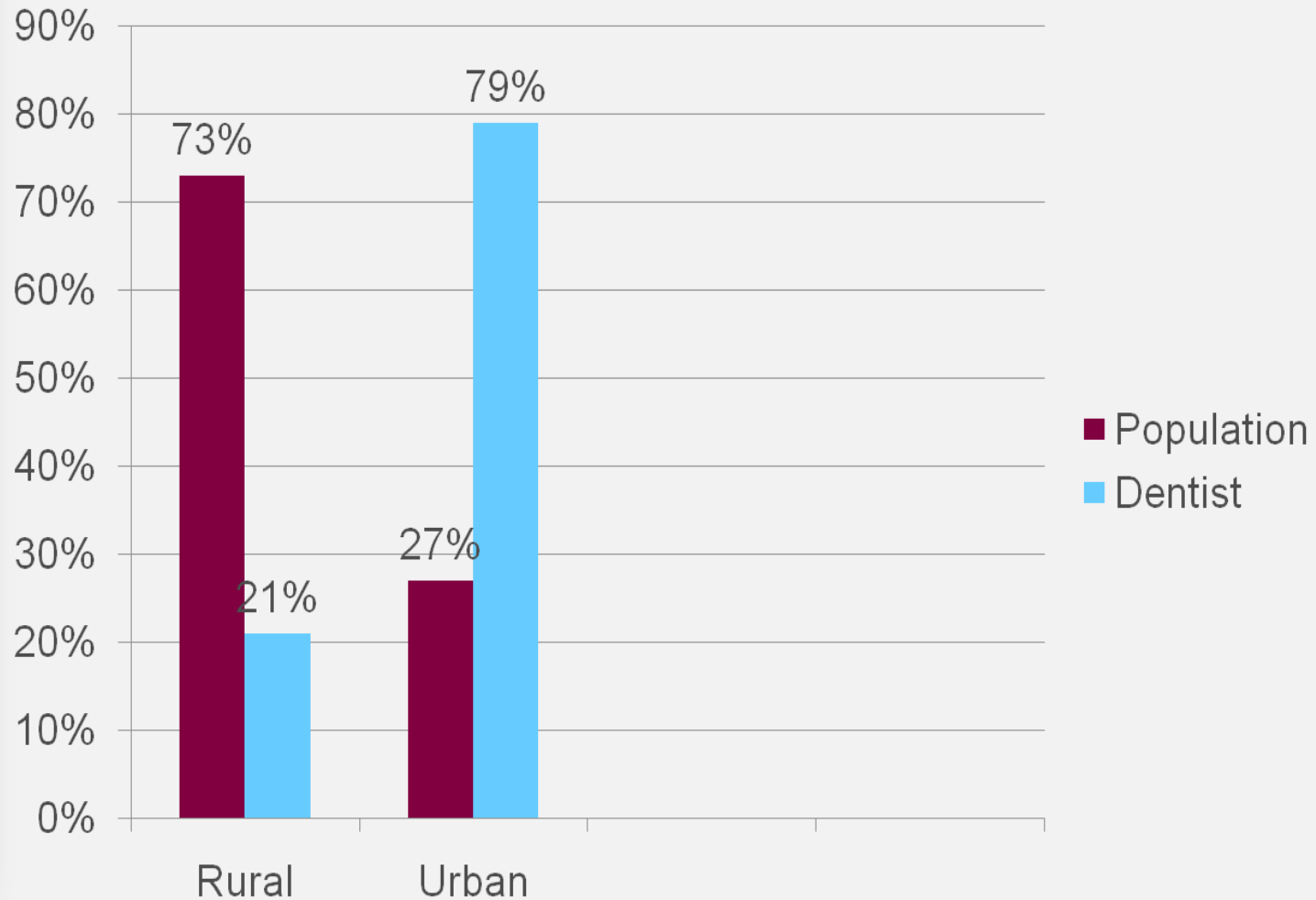


Is India's Oral Health Care better than that of China?

No!*

* GOI and WHO Conference of Manpower resources, New Delhi

21% dentists in rural area with a population share of 73%
79% dentists in urban area with a population share of 27%



Why don't dentists go to rural areas?

- Rural India has a different health priority- malnourishment and starvation in addition to death from tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS and preventable diarrheal diseases.
- 250 of the 291 dental colleges are private institutions churning out students who have paid large donations and tuition fees. Does not make economic sense to practice in rural India

Can Dental tourism justify increase in dentists?

I have no issue with dental tourism. If dentistry needs to be a part of the health programme in India, it needs to have responsibility for the terrible inequities in accessing health in our country. A significant part of income from health tourism should mitigate the suffering of the millions who do not have access to basic health. The excess Dentists may find meaningful incomes from servicing foreigners but we also have a responsibility to our own!



Health in Tribal India- Reality

There are two important factors why dentistry cannot be meaningful in the rural regions. One is the cost of private dental education and the other is the inability of the poor to pay for advanced dental treatment. We will first need to understand and assimilate the fact that dentistry is expensive business and they can find a meaningful market for their skills only in the pockets affluence in our country. Most Dentists today are the products of dental institutions that cost an arm and a leg to study in.

The poor just cannot afford dentistry unless it is subsidized by the government. The rural poor need protection from preventable diseases including TB, Malaria and of course hunger and malnourishment.



Why do we have so many
dental colleges??

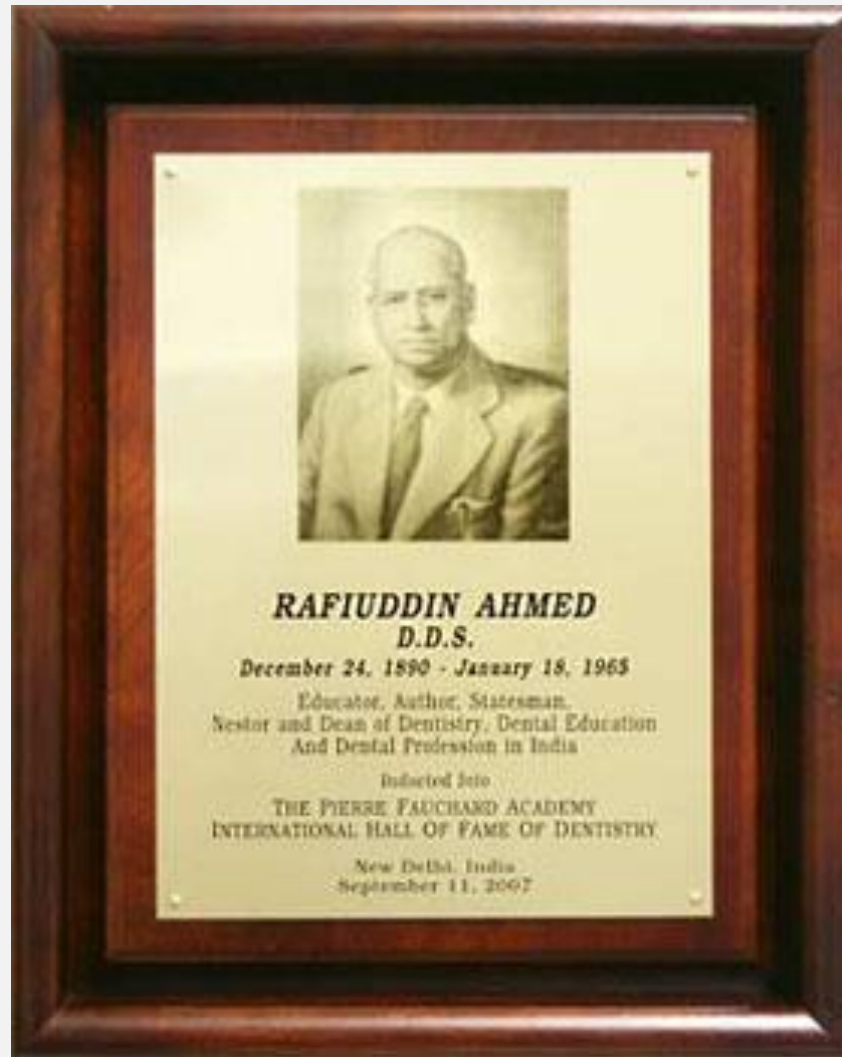
Why did Dentistry alone face this unplanned growth?

- Money! Money! Money!
- Unplanned Growth- reliance on faulty statistics
- Lack of response by the Government despite protests
- Corrupt Regulators

The Role of Money in Dental Education

- Money required for starting Dental College- Rs 5 Crores, 5 acres land and the name of ten MDS persons (only names required!)
- Returns on investment better than Medicine or nursing- avaricious private players
- Every license is up for sale

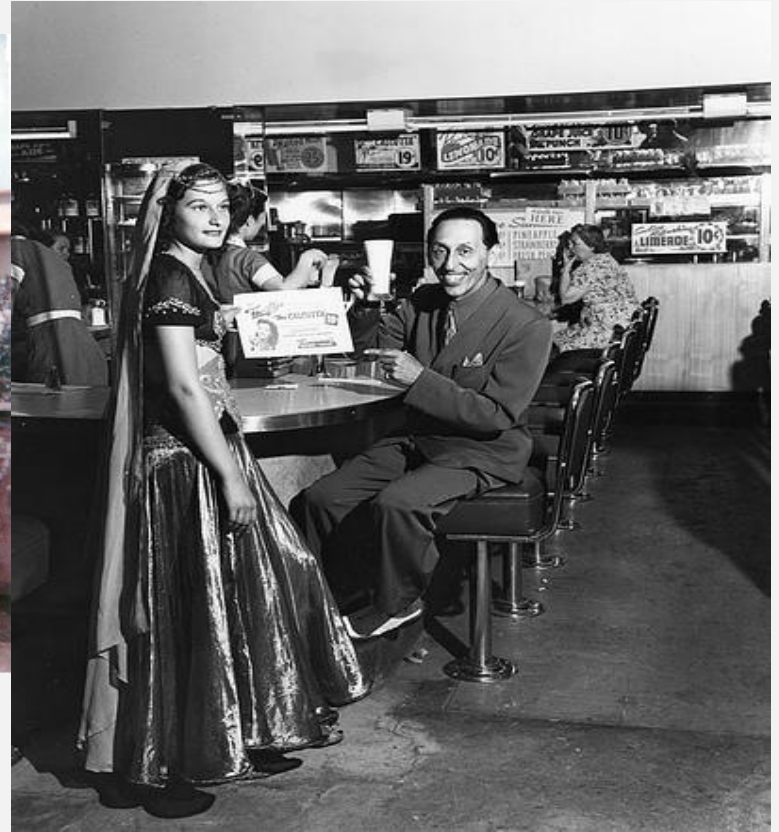
Dr. Ahmed's philosophy was: "Education is the responsibility of the State; but if no one is willing to carry the cross, I will, for as long as I can"



A Twist in the Tale- How R Ahmed was funded????



- R Ahmed Dental College



- Soda Fountain

A National Shame!

Collusion of managements with regulators and other government agencies have caused embarrassment and shame to medical and dental education in the country

NEWS » NATIONAL NEW DELHI, April 23, 2010

MCI president remanded to five-day police custody

STAFF REPORTER SHARE · COMMENT · PRINT · T+



MCI president Ketan Desai being brought to the Patiala Court in New Delhi on Friday. Photo: S. Subramaniam The Hindu

RELATED
NEWS
Centre will not intervene: Azad

Ketan Desai, president of the Medical Council of India, and three others arrested by the CBI in a Rs.2-crore bribery case, were remanded to five-day police custody by a Patiala House court here on Friday.

Pop Stars of Dental regulation!



Council heads came to be treated like deities at public places



Paper Clippings on Dentists on Strike- 2008. No action

COIMBATORE
THE HINDU • SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2008

Metupalayam Yesterday 34/24 Sathyamangalam Yesterday 34/24 Ooty Yesterday 25/14 Ooty Today 27/20 Ooty Tomorrow 27/20

Fore Regional Advertisements: Page 6

A cheerful morning on a comfortable day. Mostly cloudy sky with light rain on a few drops at night. High 26°C, low 14°C. RH max 85%.

A delightful morning with a cloudy sky. Chances of rain/fog/dew towards the evening/night. High 25°C, low 13°C. RH max 85%.

Read RT in Thiruvananthapuram

REGIONAL

BRIEFLY

Lecture
COIMBATORE: The Coimbatore Productivity Council is organising a special lecture on "Tourney towards Deming Prize" by S. Parthasarathy, resident, Rane Madras Ltd, at Chamber Hall, Avanashi Road, on April 29 (Tuesday). For details contact R.R. Ranganathan, Deputy Secretary, Coimbatore Productivity Council, Vyshanav buildings, 5-A, Race Course, Coimbatore-41 048. Tel: 0422-2215727, 393727.

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Dentists stage demonstration in Udhagamandalam
It was to register their protest against recent policy decisions that will have consequence on their profes-

D. Radhakrishnan

UDHAGAMANDALAM: Members of the Kerala Government Dental Surgeons Association, Karnataka Government Dental Surgeons Association and some private practitioners from Tamil Nadu staged a demonstration near the venue of the General Body Meeting of the Dental Council of India (DCI) here on Friday.

The Coordinator, Syndicate of Government Dental Associations and Independent Dentists George Paul who led the demonstration said that it was to register their protest against recent policy decisions that are likely to have far reaching consequences on their profession and the public.

Pointing out that the DCI has recently scrapped the compulsory internship for BDS, he said that instead it has introduced another year of study which will entail the paying of fees instead of drawing a stipend.

It feared that the DCI which was the highest statutory body regulating dental education and dentistry had succumbed to the pressures of private managements and serving their interests as

many of the members of the DCI were working in private colleges.

Safety concerns
The new system has raised safety concerns as the students, fresh from their didactic teaching programmes in class rooms will start treating patients.

Stating that without a significant input from the government dentistry needed for the poor cannot be provided, they demanded a ten year moratorium on new private dental colleges.

The dental fraternity was alarmed at the way in which private colleges have taken over the apex regulating body to serve their interests.

However, the President, DCI Anil Kohli said that the apprehensions of the demonstrators were baseless.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said that the DCI favoured a restructuring of dental education only to ensure that it kept pace with developments worldwide.

Over the last ten years many changes have taken place in the medical field. Under graduate and post graduate courses in India should be on par with those of the de-

veloped nations.

Stating that no country had internship in dental education like India, he said that it was not necessary as even third year students were

treating patients. All the colleges should ensure that the fees for four years should be collected over five years.

The role of private dental colleges cannot be under-

mined as out of 268 colleges only 33 were in the government sector.

"Whatever decision the Council takes it will be for the betterment of the society and the profession", he said and added that high priority should be given to safeguarding the interests of the common man.

The Council was urging the government to assist dentists in Primary Institutes. Continuing education-at least year-should be mandatory.



FOR THEIR RIGHTS: Dentists staging a demonstration in Udhagamandalam on Friday. - PHOTO: M. SATHYAMOORTHY

Public resentment and opinions were ignored by the government and regulators

Media Reports were ignored to
Lack of good jobs-Teething trouble
Shrabonti Bagchi| December 24, 2011.Times of India



- At 6 pm every evening, Abhishek Chaitanya steps out of his house in Thippasandra, Bangalore, and into a glassfronted building that houses the offices of a technology MNC and its BPO unit. Chaitanya, 27, walks in, goes to his desk and dons the traditional gear of his tribe: a high-end headpiece that gives him crystal-clear quality during calls.

There's nothing out of the ordinary here except that Chaitanya is a dentist by qualification. Lack of good jobs and his inability to start private practice pushed him to become a call centre executive.

Dentists turn into BPOs- waste of Training??

- Thousands of young Professionals have become BPOs in major cities.



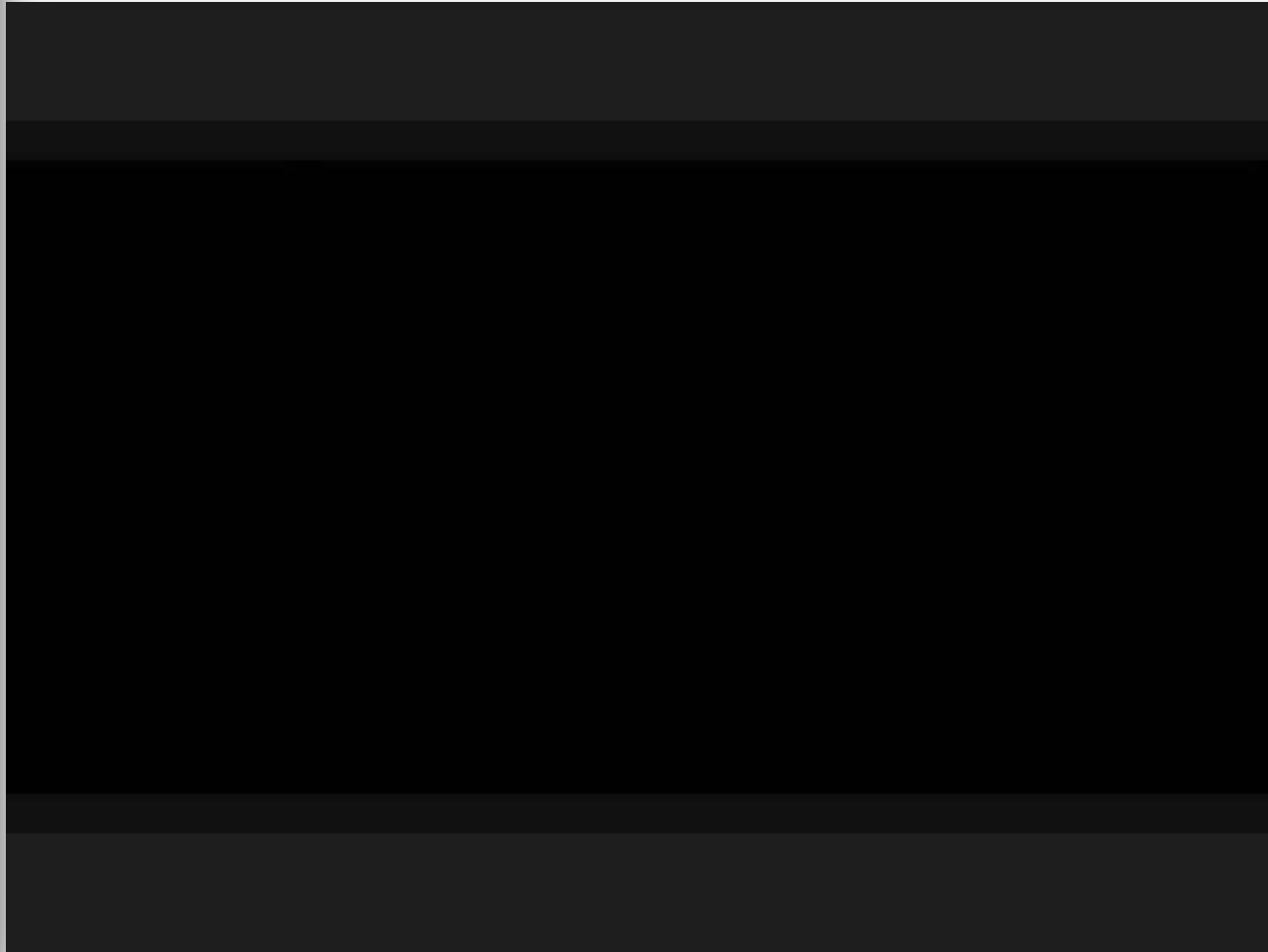
- A Waste of Training??

So where are the new graduates financially?

<u>NREGA LABOURER</u>	<u>B.D.S</u>
Daily wage - 150 - 200(Rs 4500 p.m)	Daily wage- 100 - 150(Rs 3500p.m)
Government support - Adequate(guaranteed job under NREGA)	Min. jobs , High unemployment , government jobs not guaranteed
Professional skills - average , start earning at 18	Start earning - decent income at age 28 - 30
Years invested in education -Not necessary	Years invested in education - 5 - 6 yrs(ug) , 3yrs(pg)
Health benifits , pension etc etc	Nothing permanent , can loose job any second

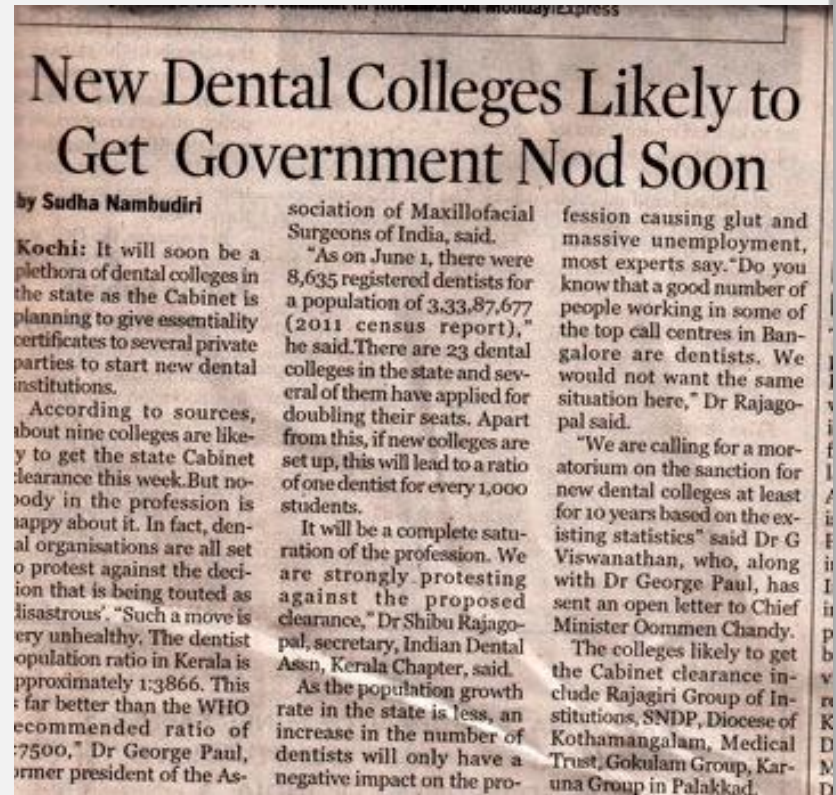
Is there any hope???....ISSUED IN THE PUBLIC INTREST

It is easy to be a Dentist- Click on the screen to see a popular advertisement demeaning dentistry



Are we missing the message again? A recent newspaper cutting- more dental colleges for a saturated state!!

- “ Those who cannot remember the past are bound to repeat it”
George Santyana



Solutions!!??

“It is easier to fight for principles than abide by them”
Adlai Stevenson

Will the new NCHRH make a difference?

A major restructuring of the regulatory bodies. The NCHRH is already on the anvil. It may take a while to go through the process of legislation, but it will certainly bring a fresh professional approach to the statutory bodies. The checks and balances seem adequate. I do not believe that a bureaucracy will be necessarily above board. At least they are less likely to be biased and certainly can be more accountable to the public and the government. Graduating dentists have every right to make a decent living.



Are the regulatory bodies cancerous??? A need for NCHRH!

The classic case of the bar being lowered to allow mediocrity can be found in the 2007 regulation of the DCI. Most people are unaware that the minimum marks required to gain entry into dentistry has been lowered to 40% for backward communities. It was previously only for Scheduled Castes. This was done insidiously to allow the children of the rich and powerful with low marks. Today Dentistry is the only professional course where Backward communities can gain entry with 40%. Nursing, Pharmacy, Homeopathy and every other professional admission requires 50% in the qualifying examination for even backward communities.



Two Elephants- Different Tasks (Tusks!)



Do we need a Flexner Report??

In 1900 a gentleman called Abraham Flexner was faced with a similar situation in the USA. There were too many Medical Schools and the standards were appalling. There was no uniformity or a level playing field. Abraham Flexner was appointed by the Federal Government with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to study the matter in detail. In 1910 he recommended that 50% of the colleges/ schools did not deserve to exist. The Government acted on this recommendation and on seats and several measures including closed down or merged colleges. It also imposed restrictions exit examinations to rationalize medical education.



Abraham Flexner

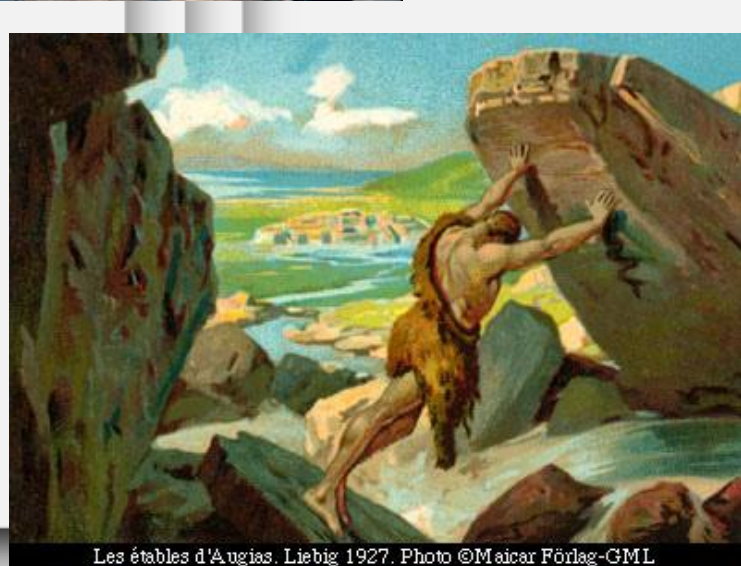
Even if 50% dental colleges are shut down, there will still be a glut by 2030 !!

Hercules



Diverting a river

- One of the labours of Hercules was the cleaning of the horse stables that accumulated enormous amount of dung- the Augean Stables. Hercules is supposed to have done so by diverting a river. That is the challenge we have. There is so much dung to be cleaned out and we badly need a Hercules and plenty of water to wash away the filth.



Les étables d'Augias. Liebig 1927. Photo ©Maicar Förlag-GML

We may need another 'Tahrir Square'



Or another 'Occupy Wall Street'



Or another Anna Hazare movement



“All that is necessary for the
triumph of evil is that good men do
nothing. “

Edmund Burke

The thin edge of the wedge! Tamilnadu and Kerala

- Tamilnadu is the only state where the IDA has challenged the PG seat selection, corporate advertisements, petitioned the Government for moratorium on Dental Colleges
- Kerala filed a petition for writ when Internship was abolished. Is currently fighting corporate advertisements

What about the rest???



They can complain by singing the popular song
'Why this kolaveri di?'

Why this Kolaveri...Kolaveri... KolaveriDi
Click the screen to hear the song! (Kolaveri means 'mental torture')



A stack of colorful sticky notes is shown against a grey background. The top note is white with a blue header bar and a pink tab on the left. The text "I have Hope!" is written in pink on the white surface. Below it, several other notes in various colors (green, yellow, orange) are visible, slightly offset to the right and bottom, creating a sense of depth.

I have Hope!

सत्यमेव जयते (Truth Alone will Triumph)

- Mundaka Upanishad, Mantra 3.1.6

Thank You

- The text of this Oration will be available on the website of the HMA Trust at
- www.dentethics.com or
- on my personal blog site www.maxfaxgp.blogspot.com